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Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17985 01 OF 02 301907Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 ONY-00 SS-15 /026 W
----------020744 301913Z /46
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2048
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

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STADIS//////////////////

FOR NEA ONLY

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ROY L., JR.)
SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON SADAT'S SUNDAY PRESS CON-
- FERENCE

FOR NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS FROM ATHERTON

1. WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING Q'S AND A'S TO HELP THE DE-
PARTMENT IN PREPARING PRESS GUIDANCE ON PRESIDENT SADAT'S
POSITION SUNDAY ON A NEW ROUND OF TALKS.

Q. NOW THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS REJECTED CONTINUING
NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL IN THE SINAI, WILL SECRETARY
VANCE BE GOING TO THE AREA AS PLANNED?

A.
--AMBASSADOR ATHERTON HAD A 2 1/2 HOUR MEETING SUNDAY
WITH PRESIDENT SADAT WHICH COVERED IN DETAIL OUR MUTUAL
ASSESSMENTS OF WHERE THE PEACE PROCESS STANDS AND WAYS
FOR MOVING IT FORWARD.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 17985 01 OF 02 301907Z

--WE ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT THE EGYPTIAN SIDE SEEMS TO
HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
(THE BEGIN PROPOSAL), IT CANNOT ENGAGE IN ANOTHER ROUND
OF NEGOTIATIONS.

--OUR EFFORTS WILL CONTINUE TO FIND WAYS TO KEEP THE
PEACE PROCESS GOING.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

--WE ALSO REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT, LIKE THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL, REMAINS COMMITTED TO FINDING A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
--WE ARE NOW STUDYING WHAT PRESIDENT SADAT TOLD AMBASSADOR ATHERTON, AS WELL AS THE RESULTS OF ATHERTON'S TALKS LAST WEEK IN ISRAEL WITH PRIMIN BEGIN.

--(ONLY TO BE USED IF THIS STEP IS DECIDED): AS PART OF THIS STUDY, AMBASSADOR ATHERTON IS RETURNING TO WASHINGTON TOMORROW (MONDAY) TO REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE SECRETARY.

--UNTIL HE HAS REPORTED TO THE SECRETARY, AND WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR REVIEW OF THE SITUATION, I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY ON POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS, INCLUDING THE TRIP OF THE SECRETARY TO THE AREA.

A. THEN IT IS POSSIBLE THE SECRETARY WILL NOT GO? WOULD HE GO WITHOUT AGREEMENT BY THE TWO SIDES TO RESUME DIRECT TALKS?

A.
--I CANNOT SPECULATE ON WHAT WILL BE DECIDED PRIOR TO OUR COMPLETING STUDY OF WHAT HAS DEVELOPED IN OUR EXCHANGES WITH THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI LEADERS SINCE
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THE MEETING AT LEEDS CASTLE.

--LET ME STRESS THAT OUR AIM REMAINS TO MOVE THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD, AND WE ARE NOW STUDYING HOW THAT CAN BEST BE DONE.

Q. IS IT POSSIBLE THIS COULD BE DONE BY SECRETARY VANCE'S SHUTTLING BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT TO BREAK THE IMPASSE, RATHER THAN IN DIRECT TALKS?

A.
--I HAVE NOTHING FOR YOU ON THAT SPECIFIC QUESTION PENDING THE OUTCOME OF OUR CONSIDERATIONS.

--LET ME RECALL IN GENERAL WHERE WE STOOD FOLLOWING THE TALKS AT LEEDS CASTLE. WE CONSIDERED THESE DIRECT TALKS WERE USEFUL IN EXPLORING THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO SIDES, AND NOW THE TIME HAD COME FOR FINDING WAYS TO RECONCILE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO.
--THAT IS STILL OUR POSITION, AND WE ARE REVIEWING THE SITUATION TO SEE HOW BEST WE CAN HELP IN THIS PROCESS.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

--WE ARE DETERMINED THAT THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REACH A SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT NOT BE LOST.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S DEMAND THAT ISRAEL AGREE TO WITHDRAW AS A PRECONDITION FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS?

A.
--I HAVE NO DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF THE POSITION OF EITHER EGYPT OR ISRAEL, PENDING THE COMPLETION OF OUR REVIEW OF THE SITUATION.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON WHAT SHOULD BE IN THE

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17985 02 OF 02 301911Z
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NEGOTIATIONS?

A.
--OUR GENERAL POSITION ON THE ELEMENTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS REMAINS AS THE SECRETARY STATED ON "ISSUES AND ANSWERS" - "...WE HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THE BASIC PRINCIPLE UNDERLYING THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS IS RESOLUTION 242, AND 242 VERY CLEARLY TALKS ABOUT WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IT MAKES NO DISTINCTION AS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND WE AND THE OTHERS HAVE ALWAYS INTERPRETED 242 AS APPLYING ON ALL FRONTS.

--PRESIDENT SADAT REPEATED HIS POSITION, INCLUDING BOTH

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

WITHDRAWAL AND SECURITY, WHICH ARE BOTH ELEMENTS IN RESOLUTION 242.

--WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT BOTH SIDES MUST BE FLEXIBLE IN THE CONTINUING EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENTS ESSENTIAL FOR FULFILLING RESOLUTION 242.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 17985 02 OF 02 301911Z

--BEYOND THAT, I HAVE NO SPECIFIC COMMENT ON THE SUB-STANCE OF EITHER SIDE'S POSITION.

Q. HAS THE TIME NOW COME FOR THE UNITED STATES TO PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS FOR BREAKING THE IMPASSE?

A.
--I HAVE SAID WE ARE REVIEWING THE SITUATION FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR ATHERTON'S TALKS IN ISRAEL AND EGYPT.

--WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE BEST WAY TO REACH AGREEMENT IS THROUGH DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT WAYS CAN BE FOUND FOR THIS TO BE DONE.

--WE ARE READY TO HELP IN THE PROCESS, IF WE HAVE IDEAS WHICH MIGHT HELP BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES' POSITIONS.

--I HAVE NOTHING FOR YOU ON WHETHER THAT POINT HAS BEEN REACHED.

Q. DOESN'T SADAT'S REFUSAL NOW TO GO TO THE SINAI TALKS RENEGE ON WHAT KAMEL TOLD YOU AT LEEDS CASTLE?

A.
--THE SECRETARY STATED THE SITUATION AS HE SAW IT AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE LEEDS MEETING. HE SAID HE WAS READY TO GO TO THE AREA TO HELP CONTINUE THE PROCESS BEGUN AT LEEDS, AND EXPECTED A NEW MEETING WHILE THERE.

--WE ARE NOW ASSESSING, IN LIGHT OF AMBASSADOR ATHERTON'S
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PAGE 03 CAIRO 17985 02 OF 02 301911Z

SUBSEQUENT TALKS, WHETHER THIS SITUATION STILL OBTAINS.
EILTS

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO17985
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780312-0786
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978075/aaaaadsy.tel
Line Count: 224
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS, ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS, ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1976370
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS GUIDANCE ON SADAT\'S SUNDAY PRESS CON- - FERENCE FOR NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS FROM ATHERTON
TAGS: OVIP, (ATHERTON, ARTHUR L JR)
To: STATE TEL AVIV
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dbd9f071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014